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Denationalisation from Below. Globalisation and its Impacts on Governance in Metropolitan Areas

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Abstract

The quest for area-wide governance in urban regions has been placed on the political and academic agenda once again. New forms of governance on the metropolitan scale are mushrooming all over the western World. Along with it goes a theoretically proposed shift of political steering capacities away from the national to the city region scale. However, empirical work on the reasons and conditions for this rescaling of governance capacities is scarce and often shares a functionalist and positivist perspective. It is frequently argued that the shifting and jumping of scales are functionally adequate responses to new economic pressures induced by processes of globalisation. However, these arguments neglect the politically contested and undetermined character of rescaling processes. Metropolitan governance reforms in Europe have been shaped by confrontations of political-economic forces. Research has shown that initiatives for urban-regional restructuring are mainly supported by (1) political elites in distressed central cities, (2) modernizing national governments, (3) business elites or more general «boosterists». The opponents encompass (1) representatives of existing regional agencies, (2) representatives of affluent communes that fear central city dominance and (3) residents and citizens of the urban region that fear a loss of democratic accountability. Furthermore, advocates of metropolitan reforms use the functionalist discourse (regarding territorial competitiveness, regional learning, and globalisation) in order to justify their claim for institutional modifications. Much of the functionalist discourse on imperatives of globalisation has served to legitimate economic and political restructuring in the interest of certain coalitions over others.

In our paper we address three closely interrelated issues, namely (1) the conflicts that shape metropolitan reforms, (2) the discourses that structure these conflicts, and (3) the territorial scales that are addressed in the political conflicts at stake.

The paper draws on two research projects on urban restructuring, one on the development of public transport governance in Swiss metropolitan areas since 1945 and one on the international activities of the same Swiss city regions since the 1980s.

We conclude that similar conflicts between growth-oriented and social cohesion oriented coalitions emerge in both policy fields under scrutiny. However, in urban public transport these conflicts encompass a broader range of actors, arenas and discourses. As a consequence, the narrative of competitiveness is often challenged and rejected. This result stands in sharp contrast to the international activities of city regions, where the functionalist discourse on global economic pressure is hegemonic. We also show that in urban public transport coalitions use different scales in order to prevail, whereas the international activities are limited to the core cities. The quest for the 'common' and the 'right' scale is thus much more contested in urban public transport than in the field of international activities of city regions. Finally in all Swiss metropolitan areas under scrutiny the increasing use of the functionalist discourse in the last decade or so has lead to new power configurations between political-economic forces.

1. Introduction

It is commonly admitted that metropolitan areas play a crucial role in the process of globalisation. As places where human activities concentrate, city-regions are the nodal points of the increasingly globalised networks of economic, social and cultural exchange. “Global cities” Sassen 1991, linked and ranked in an international order of economic centrality are the spatial anchors for global flows of goods, persons, capital and information. It is evident that cities not only give impetus to globalisation, but are also transformed by doing so. However, the question of how cities transform by participating in the process of globalisation is subject to debate. Some observers have argued that globalisation leads to a dissolution of territoriality, reducing the role of place-based social institutions by the replacement of “spaces of place” by “spaces of flows” (Castells 2000: 407 *passim*). Another reading, suggested by the growing strand of literature on “new regionalism” (see Swanstrom 2001), emphasises the need for a more differentiated picture. As Brenner (1999: 435) has argued, globalisation entails a dialectical interplay between the moment of *detrterritorialization* (i.e. the drive towards time-space compression under capitalism) and the moment of *reterritorialization* (i.e. the production of relatively fixed spatial configurations such as territorial infrastructure). This idea is also expressed by Swyngedouw’s (1997) concept of “glocalisation”, highlighting the link between the globalisation of flows on the one hand, and the recomposition of local (urban) territories on the other hand. According to this view, capitalism’s increasingly glocal geographies tend to reconfigure – rather than to dissolve – territoriality, and produce a pressure to relativise and rearrange existing scales of spatial organisation. These processes of “re-scaling” not only concern the scalar organisation of economic territories, but – due to the state’s central role in contemporary capitalism – also the inherited scales of state territories.

Drawing on these basic assumptions Brenner (2003: 299) argues that the transformation of cities in the process of globalisation can only be understood by an approach “that is explicitly attuned to the intimate links between urbanization processes [...] and the continually evolving spatialities of state power under capitalism”. Rescaling of functional, socio-economic urban territories in the wake of globalisation, he argues, is intrinsically linked to the rescaling of the state, i.e. the transformation of the state’s territorial organisation through which new institutions and regulatory frameworks are being produced. This process of state rescaling has to be viewed as a constitutive and enabling moment of capitalist globalisation (Brenner 1999: 439), as it aims at providing the territorial collective goods that actors of globalisation need (e.g. transport infrastructure, business development areas, etc.). More precisely, Brenner

argues, the transformation of state territoriality transfers state power away from the national scale – that used to be the predominant organisational locus of the Fordist-Keynesian state. On the one hand, state power is transferred upwards to supranational agencies such as WTO, or the EU. On the other hand, it is devolved downwards to the state's regional and local level, causing a change of their 'raison d'être': "Contemporary local and regional states no longer operate as the managerial agents of nationally scaled collective consumption programmes but serve as entrepreneurial agencies of 'state-financed capital' oriented towards maintaining and enhancing the locational advantages of their delineated territorial jurisdictions" (Brenner 1999: 440).

The central tenet of this perspective is that urban-regional restructuring under globalisation, and the emergence of new sub-national scales of state power are inextricably linked. Hence, for analyses in this field, the aim must be to lay open the processes through which this link is produced. One major topic of interest in this context is the issue of metropolitan governance, that precisely illustrates the link between processes of urban restructuring and re-scaling of state spatiality. While socio-economic interdependencies on urban-regional scales have increased, the map of metropolitan governmental institutions, often created in the late 19th or early 20th century, has failed to adapt. As a result, most city-regions in the OECD are characterised by a widening gap between, on the one hand, the functional urban space, and, on the other hand, the institutional territories that can provide public governance capacity for this space.

It is no wonder, thus, that the question of metropolitan governance is back on the agenda (see OECD 2001), and many large city-regions across the OECD currently witness processes of institutional reform, seeking to strengthen area-wide governance capacity (see Heinelt and Kübler 2005). Some have argued that this renewed interest in metropolitan governance portends a change regarding the *essence* of governance in metropolitan areas (Brenner 1999: 440-441; Brenner 2003: 301-304). According to this view, metropolitan governance in the era of new regionalism no longer serves the purpose of managing nationally scaled Keynesian programmes of collective consumption. Instead, its rationale is to achieve state regulations and to enable state-financed investments oriented towards maintaining and enhancing the locational advantages of a given metropolitan area in the national and global competition against others (known colloquially as 'boosterism').

Drawing on this general background, the remainder of this paper analyses the recomposition of scales of state power in Swiss metropolitan areas. Following the central tenets of the

critical political economy perspective laid out above, we endeavour to provide an understanding of the (conflictual) processes related to the construction of new scales of governance in Swiss metropolitan areas. In his highly influent recent book, Patrick LeGalès (2002) has argued that the importance of urban territories for the production and accumulation of wealth in globalised capitalism has widened the gap between city-region's limited political autonomy and their growing economic weight. It is clear, however, that the increasing economic weight goes hand in hand with a regional integration of urban territories. Urban economies thrive thanks to the spatial extension of the territorial systems of economic production and social re-production. In other words, sprawl was one of the pre-conditions for the increase of factual urban weight in intergovernmental hierarchies.

This paper hence aims to analyse the re-scaling of metropolitan areas in two policy fields that have gained importance for the economic competitiveness of urban areas in the age of globalisation. We will look at urban public transport (section 2) and international networking (section 3). We will investigate in both policy-fields how globalisation pressures influence the recomposition of territorial scales of governance. The development in these two policy areas is seen as crucial for the economic well-being of city-regions. A good transportation system allows a good connectivity to major hubs in the world. The international activities of city-regions are seen as one political response to economic globalisation and allows for the promotion of the city-region on the global scale. We will look at two Swiss metropolitan areas that have a very distinct relationship to globalisation; Zurich being the Swiss city with the highest global connectivity and Berne being a regional city with a strong national outline as the headquarter of the national administration. This design allows for a strong test of the underlying assumption of a changed scalar system of metropolitan governance in the era of globalisation.

2. The Emerging Metropolitan Governance in Public Transport

This section analyses the transformation of metropolitan governance schemes in the field of urban public transport in the metropolitan areas of Zurich and Berne in the last thirty years. Urban public transport is taken here as a collective good provided by the State to actors of globalisation. Transportation policy within an urban area is a crucial issue. A high quality urban public transport system can be an important location factor (Standortfaktor) for economic actors. Urban public transport is thus highly ranked on the political agenda in metropolitan areas and is one of the most contested issues in metropolitan political debates.

Furthermore, due to its obvious territoriality, urban public transport shapes the boundaries and the internal structure (and the perceptions of them) of a metropolitan area. Hence, the governance of urban public transport is a significant case to the analysis of impacts of socio-economic globalisation on the politics of scale within a metropolitan area.

In most Swiss metropolitan areas the mode of coordination of public transport has changed significantly over the last thirty to fifty years. The development for the two cases of Zurich and Berne can be summarized as follows:

After WWII the network of urban public transport in the agglomeration of Berne was fragmented in terms of infrastructure, ownership and governance. Distinct patterns of public transport have evolved on three territorially different levels: the core city, the regional level and the supra-regional level. The new law on public transport, passed by the cantonal parliament in 1993, has put an end to fragmented governance. The current public transport system in the agglomeration of Berne relies on the regional transport conference (Regionale Verkehrskonferenz, RVK) set up in 1997. All communes of the metropolitan area of Berne are members of the RVK. Apart from the communes, the cantonal agency on public transport and main service providers participate in the decision-making process. As the RVK is responsible for the planning of the supply as well as for the implementation and coordination of public transport schemes, it is the core of the metropolitan transport system. Hence, by the end of the 20th century, a regional governance structure has been established which links the three territorial levels to each other, though acting in the shadow of hierarchy of the canton (Kübler and Schwab 2007).

In Zurich the situation after World War II is characterised mainly by the existence of major train lines owned by the Swiss Federal Railways (the national railway company owned by the state) connecting the core city to other urban centres in the country, but also providing some services to commuters from suburbs that they happen to cross. At the local level, the tramways – constructed in the late 19th century – play the major role for public transportation within the core city. Half a century later, the situation has completely changed. The network of urban public transport been greatly improved in terms of capacity (new lines). But its most characteristic element today is the extraordinary connectivity between the different parts of the network that have a varying territorial scope (e.g. regional train and/or bus lines on the one hand and local trams or busses on the other hand). This overall connectivity is ensured by the *Zürcher Verkehrsverbund* (ZVV), an agency of the cantonal government set up in 1990. It is responsible for all means of public transport throughout the canton of Zurich, and even

within functionally connected territories of neighbouring cantons. The ZVV is clearly the organisational core of the Zurich metropolitan public transport system: it is in charge of network planning and timetable-coordination, it sets the user fares and funds transport services. The territorial scale for political regulation of metropolitan transport in the Zurich area is that of the canton, while municipalities play a very minor role. This is a striking difference to the case of Berne, where the regional transport conferences are the main governing bodies of the public transport system, thus situated at an intermediary scale between the communes and the canton.

In the next section we will describe and explain the different trajectories taken by the two urban areas under scrutiny leading to the actual metropolitan governance schemes. In the last part of this section, we will analyse the importance of (perceived) globalisation on the re-scaling of metropolitan governance.

2.1 Different trajectories to metropolitan public transport governance

After WW II, urban traffic changed tremendously. The emergence of private cars modified the course of transportation in and around the cities. The numbers of cars grew rapidly from less than 5000 in Zurich and 2000 in Berne by the end of WW II to more than 40'000 in Zurich and 20'000 in Berne by 1960 (Galliker 1998; Bähler et al. 2003). Traffic jams and accidents became notorious. Between the 1950s and the early 1970s - in the period commonly known as 'Expertenplanung' (Steiner 1998) - both cities addressed the obvious problems of urban traffic with a similar approach. The city executives created expert committees and working groups, which eventually came up with plans on how to reconstruct the existing transport structure. These plans all shared the idea of a 'verkehrsgerechte Stadt' meaning that the inner city should always be accessible for motorised private traffic (Sulzer 1989; Steiner 1998)¹. However, most of the projects faced strong opposition in the citizenry and some major attempts at reconstructing the traffic infrastructure failed at the ballot box². Confronted with the repeated failure of large infrastructure projects, both cities started to focus on other strategies of problem solving.

¹ See for instance: Gutachten Walther/Leibbrand 1954 and the Generalverkehrsplan 1964 for Berne and Gutachten Leibbrand/Kremer 1954, Pirath/Feuchtinger 1954 and Regionalplanung Zürich 1960 for Zurich.

² See the the U-Bahn-project (1960), Tiefbahn-project (1962) and the S-/U-Bahn-project (1973) in Zurich, the Expressstrasse (1960) and the H-Lösung (1970) in Berne.

The actors in the urban area of Berne (mainly the city and the service providers) tried to foster regional political cooperation from the early 1960s onwards³. But attempts at deepening the regional integration (comprehensive ticketing schemes, regional transport system) of public transport failed due to the very heterogeneous ownership-structure and the conflicting interests of the communes. Furthermore, the involvement of the canton was very limited as the communes feared a loss of their political autonomy⁴. However, the next important decisions were taken at the cantonal level. First of all, the cantonal parliament set the legal grounds for the financial support of regional public transport projects in 1986. This led to the implementation of a comprehensive ticketing scheme in 1989 (Bäre-Abi) containing 75 communes, thus the whole agglomeration of Berne. Furthermore, a working group on the cooperation within the agglomeration of Berne, financed by the city, the canton and the regional organisations, published a highly influential report on the traffic problems in the urban region and possible solutions in 1987 (Güller 1987). In the vein of this report, a new cantonal law on public transport was passed in 1993, establishing a fourth political level: the regional transport conferences. In contrast to the previous fuzzy coordination between the communes, the new law established a clear and formally defined frame of interaction and decision-making within the regional transport conference. The evolving and encompassing governance structure in the agglomeration of Berne was eventually mirrored by the establishment of a regional “S-Bahn” system.

In Zurich the negative popular votes in the 1960s and 1970s produced a major political deadlock in the field of metropolitan public transport. Meanwhile, the transport problems in the Zurich metropolitan area, as well as in the core city continued to increase. In 1980, the cantonal government decided to force a way out of this stalemate, together with the Swiss Federal Railways, which were their major ally in this undertaking. Resuming the *S-Bahn* project from an earlier proposal (that faltered in the popular vote in 1973), they set up a financial strategy that did not require the involvement of any of the metropolitan municipalities, especially not of the city of Zurich. In 1981, they presented a plan to extend the surface heavy rail network and improve its capacity at several nodal places. With half the financial volume of the 1973 plan, this project could be financed without involvement of the

³ See the creation of the Regionalplanungsverein Stadt Berne und umliegende Gemeinden (RPV) in 1963, the establishment of a research center for regional issues in the administration of the city in 1964 and then the creation of the highly influential Ausschuss zur Förderung und Gestaltung des öffentlichen Verkehrs in der Region Berne (AFö) in 1974.

⁴ For arguments in this respect see the debate on the initiative of the social-democrats ‘Gesetz für einen umweltfreundlichen Verkehr’, which was rejected by the cantonal public in 1988.

municipalities – 80% of the costs were to be covered by the canton, the remaining 20% by the Swiss Federal Railways. The new *S-Bahn* plan was easily approved by the cantonal parliament. The cantonal government decided that, in terms of governance, the management of the transport system should be located at the scale of the canton and that the municipalities should only play a minor role within it. Hence, the cantonal law on transport was changed accordingly (in 1988), setting up the *Zürcher Verkehrsverbund* (ZVV) as a cantonal government agency, overseeing, planning and funding the entire metropolitan public transport and contracting transport services with various operators. This includes not only the *S-Bahn* as the backbone of the overall transport system, but also light rail, tramway and bus services within the whole canton.

We can conclude that although both cities faced similar problems, different paths to solve these problems were followed. While a regional perspective eventually dominated the political debate resulting in a regional governance scheme in Berne, it was the canton that took over the leadership in the field of public transport in Zurich. These differences can be explained, to a large extent, by the different frames used in the political debates. The frames determined the understanding of the problem by the relevant actors as either one of economic dependency (as in the case of Zurich) or as one of political autonomy (as in the case of Berne). It is due to these different frames that the process of socio-economic globalisation has another impact in the context of Zurich than in the context of Berne.

2.2 Different frames – different globalisations

The dominant frames in the political debate of urban public transport governance differ greatly between the two urban areas under scrutiny. The concept of policy frames refers to the constructivist idea that actors' understandings of reality are 'framed' by taken-for-granted beliefs and assumptions. The beliefs and baseline assumptions in turn shape the way in which the reality is made meaningful. "A frame is a way of describing how people think about reality and linking this description to human purposes" (Rein 1983: 101, cited in: Brandwein 2006: 232). The conflicts around a policy problem depend on the way a certain reality is framed and is made meaningful within the political arena. Policy frames shape the way of how problems are articulated and which solutions are more reasonable than others. By using the concept of frames we can explain the different impact of (perceived) globalisation on the political development in the urban areas under scrutiny.

The dominant frame for urban public transport policy in Zurich was and still is that of 'economic dependency'. The key assumption is that all communes and thus the whole canton

of Zurich essential depend on the economic performance of the core-city. The frame constitutes a hierarchy between the different political territories. The core-city is the most important economic and political actor, while the surrounding communes are negligible⁵. The canton, however, is the quasi-neutral mediator of the different communal interests. Still, even the canton is dependent on the core-city. In the frame of 'economic dependency', urban public transport is understood as an economic policy. Transportation is perceived as a mean to preserve the economic flows between the different places in and around the city-centre (Blanc 1993). Hence, congestions and nuisance in public transport harm the economic performance of the core-city and thus of the canton as a whole. The involvement of the canton in the struggle of urban public transport governance can be explained against this background.

The discourse on globalisation interpreted in Zurich through the lenses of economic dependency even fostered the perception of an economically interdependent metropolitan area. In the context of Zurich, globalisation is understood very similar to the notion the re-scaling literature suggests. Globalisation is perceived here as a socio-economic process which challenges existing scalar hierarchies on the national and international level and thus demands coherent political reaction from the city-region. The enhanced involvement by the canton and the nearly uncontested support for the extension of the transport infrastructure in the 1980s can be seen as a result of that. There is a striking cohesion between interests of the core-city and the canton when it comes to public transportation as part of economic policy. The distinct perception of globalisation therefore has an impact on metropolitan governance in Zurich insofar, as it brings the canton and the core city closer together in order to strengthen the whole metropolitan area vis-à-vis the federal and the international level.

In Berne, however, the dominant policy frame is that of 'political autonomy'. The underlying and uncontested belief in this debate is that the communal level is the most important political scale in the Swiss federal system. In this perspective the commune is the adequate locus of collective self-regulation and political identity. Hence, the communes need to be autonomous for the political system to be legitimate⁶. The relation between the communes is that of equals, as all communes are independent from each other. In this perspective, the canton is nothing

⁵ See the debates in the cantonal parliament in 1951; or the composition of the several working groups and committees, in which hardly any representatives of surrounding communes had any seat (Arbeitsausschuss Eisenbahnfragen; Ausschuss für den Zürcher Vorortsverkehr; Behördendelegation für den Zürcher Regional Verkehr)

⁶ See the debate on the new law on railroad companies in 1967/68 in the cantonal parliament and then very illuminating in 1987/88 in the debate on the Social democrats initiative 'Gesetz für einen umweltfreundlichen Verkehr'.

more than the sum of all communes and the intermediary to the federal level. However, after WW II until the 1980s, a regional perspective on political autonomy slowly developed⁷ where regions are understood as clusters containing more or less similar communes. Thus, the establishment of a regional perspective did not change the frame as such. But it changed the territorial scale to which the frame was applied. Public transport in this frame is mainly understood by the involved actors as a mean to preserve and as a representation of the clear-cut borders between the communes and regions respectively.

The issue of globalisation in the context of metropolitan governance hardly ever occurs in Berne. The political struggles on urban public transport in Berne are focused on the topic of political autonomy and identity: Questions of economic growth or interdependencies are raised but have never obtained the same prominence. Thus, globalisation as an economic phenomenon is not relevant in the context of urban public transport. It does not undermine and cannot be meaningfully integrated into the frame of 'political autonomy' and the arguments put forward.

As a conclusion of our analysis on the development of urban public transport governance in Zurich and Berne, we can argue that amongst other reasons (direct-democratic setting, initial institutional context) the framing of the policy is crucial in two respects. First, it shapes the understanding of the policy and thus the positions of the involved actors. While in Zurich the core-city and the canton had similar interests and were predominant, the communes and regional organisations mainly influenced the development of public transport governance in Berne. Second, the dominant frame shapes if and in what ways emerging socio-economical processes can be integrated in existing political debates. In Zurich globalisation understood by the actors mainly as an economic topic fostered the metropolitan integration at the cantonal level. In Berne however, globalisation, also perceived as an economic phenomenon, is more or less absent in the political debate. In Berne, the nodal point in discussions on urban public transport is that of political autonomy rather than economic concerns. Hence, in Berne the politics of scale remain within the boundaries of the canton, while Zurich's perception of the relevant political space goes beyond the cantonal and even national scale.

⁷ See for instance the several reports and publications by the 'Stadt- und Regionalforschungsstelle' of the city of Berne (Berne Beiträge zur Stadt- und Regionalforschung 1964 - 1975) and the cantonal 'Kommission zur Frage der Regionenbildung' founded 1973.

3. Cities (or City-Regions?) and Their International Activities

This section analyses questions of metropolitan governance by looking at the international activities at the communal level within the two metropolitan areas of Zurich and Berne. International activities of urban areas are currently mushrooming all over Europe and even globally. City partnerships have a long tradition, especially since the aftermath of the Second World War where these partnerships were established to foster peace between the former enemy states on the local scale. However, since the 1980s, we witness an astonishing increase in city networking, the new form of communal international activities⁸. Communes and especially large city-regions started to cooperate in two ways: On the one hand, they formed strategic alliances in lobby-networks (as e.g. Eurocities) to lobby for the urban sake at higher scales. On the other hand, communes cooperate in different policy sectors (as e.g. public transport, culture and many others) to learn from each other. Overall, the increasing international activities of city-regions are seen as a political response to an increased competitiveness on economic matters among large city-regions of the world (Brenner 2003: 298, Savitch and Kantor 2002).

We will analyse the international activities of the communal level in the two Swiss city-regions under scrutiny to see if globalisation pressure has led the communes within one city-region to increase their cooperation concerning their international activities. If the hypothesis of a need of increased metropolitan governance for the sake of competitiveness is correct, we would expect a close collaboration of the economically intertwined communities within one metropolitan area. Let us first present an overview of the international activities of the two city-regions under scrutiny.

3.1 Global Swiss City-Regions?

The city of Zurich, although highly connected to global markets through its financial headquarters, has been relatively absent from international networking for a long time. There has been a phase from 2002 until late 2006, where the city government was very defensive on these matters. This was due to a problematic partnership with a Chinese city in the past. After strong criticism from the main right wing party (SVP) in 2001, arguing that the project lacked any specific gains for Zurich, the city government tried fruitlessly to change its focus, emphasising the economic gains coming from it. The other city partnership with San Francisco is run by a private organisation, only modestly including officials of the city.

⁸ However, Vion (2001) and Saunier (2001) in their analysis of interurban networking in the late 19th and early 20th century show that even international networking between cities has a longer tradition that we might expect.

Networking activities are fragmented as they are carried out by different departments of the city's administration. Foreign relations are only a subordinated task of one of the mayor's administrative units. Only recently, the mayor has rediscovered this field and Zurich has become a member of UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) and of Eurocities in mid 2007, two important networks in this respect. Before engaging in international contacts, the city of Zurich always carefully evaluates the costs and benefits of such an activity. Still being far from having a coherent strategy, international activities are now at least on the agenda in Zurich although new activities are only taken up if they are seen as having a positive effect on the competitiveness of the city.

Looking at the international activities of the agglomeration communities in Zurich, we can see that only six of the 23 communities with more than 10'000 inhabitants have a partner city. The city of Dübendorf is a member of the international interurban network Climate Alliance, but the engagement has been close to zero for several years now. Not only are the agglomeration communities very reluctant to engage in international activities, there is also absolutely no contact between the city of Zurich and the other communities concerning their international activities. This is astonishing at least in the case of the cooperation within the Climate Alliance network. Although both the city of Zurich and Dübendorf are members of the same international network, they have never cooperated in this respect. They did neither coordinate the presence at the international conferences of the network nor the position of their cities on certain issues of the networking activity. The fact that the former is an agglomeration community of the latter did not at all alter their cooperation mode within this network.

All other international networking activities in the city-region of Zurich are done solely by the core city itself. The disinterest seems to be reciprocal. Neither the city of Zurich showed any interest in incorporating the agglomeration communities in its international activities nor showed the agglomeration communities any effort to be more incorporated into the international activities of the city of Zurich.

Berne, as the capital city, is astonishingly the Swiss city that is most reluctant towards international activities⁹. Berne has no official partner city and is only member of two international networks, one in the domain of cultural heritage and one in the domain of sustainability. These activities are carried out by different departments, there is no one within the city administration who takes care of these activities and there is no overview of the

⁹ In a broader study, we studied the international activities of five of the largest city-regions in Switzerland as well as two city-regions from the EU (Lyon and Stuttgart). See van der Heiden (2008).

existing activities and no strategic plan from the city government concerning this aspect. Even a debate about a possible strategy for its international activities is missing in Berne to date.

The agglomeration communities in the city-region of Berne are more active than the ones in Zurich. Four out of the six agglomeration communities of Berne with more than 10'000 inhabitants have at least one foreign partner city. However, none of them is engaged in an international network. Interestingly, there is no cooperation on their respective international activities neither between the four agglomeration communities nor between any of the four communities and the city of Berne. Both sides seem to intend this non-cooperation. Neither the communities in the agglomeration nor the city of Berne have ever tried to cooperate with each other on matters of international activities. Nobody seems to see any profit in such a cooperation on international matters. The international activities clearly belong to the scale of the individual commune and are not shared in a larger perimeter. The international activities in the city-region of Berne are, as in the case of Zurich, not a matter of metropolitan governance. Possible links within the metropolitan area concerning the international connectivity are a non-issue.

We can therefore conclude in a first step that the economically more globally oriented city of Zurich has started its own international activities whereas the economically more regionally and nationally oriented city of Berne has not. However, we can see an astonishing loneliness of the two core cities. The agglomeration communities in both city-regions are reluctant in developing their own international activities. There is also no cooperation between the communities within a metropolitan area concerning their international activities. We can see that the political global connectivity is a sole matter of core cities, not involving questions of metropolitan governance on a first glance. Let us now turn to possible explanations for this interesting finding.

3.2 Going Global Alone?

In the case of public transport, we could see a certain reciprocal dependency of the Hinterland and the core city. The economic development was hindered by the unwillingness to cooperate. In the case of international activities, the dependencies are somehow different. Although core cities do face centrality burdens in the international activities as well (they are the ones that are internationally connected and they pay for these contacts), they also have the gains from these contacts. Representing Zurich on the international scale politically is a privilege for the core-city that could hardly be transferred to one of the agglomeration communities. Even to participate in such a cooperation scheme seems rather unattractive for the agglomeration

communities as they probably would just pay but not profit from it. The international activities are thus a key asset of the core cities in the competitiveness game *within* metropolitan areas. This explains why, although the economic necessity to go global is different for the two city-regions under scrutiny, this does not change the interplay between the core city and the agglomeration communities. That is also why policy-makers in core-cities do perceive the international activities as crucial for the economic competitiveness of the respective city-regions but do not try to involve the agglomeration communities in the international activities. On the one hand, the financial burdens of such an engagement are much smaller than in the domain of public transport. On the other hand, the core city is much less dependent on the agglomeration communities to maintain the competitiveness through its international contacts. An obstructive policy of the agglomeration communities towards the core city's international activities would have almost no effect. This explains why the international activities rest in the hands of the core cities and why we cannot observe a rescaling of this policy domain in metropolitan governance.

To sum up the argument on international activities, we started with the observation that the degree of exposedness to global economic pressures of the two city-regions under scrutiny is different. Zurich as a truly globalised city-region has started to reflect on the necessity to develop a political international connectivity as a consequence of its highly international economic outline. It is no surprise that Berne, with its much more nationally oriented economic outlook is much more reluctant to engage in international activities. There is no economic need to develop political contacts beyond the national borders. Concerning the question of a rescaling of metropolitan areas, we however witness astonishing parallels between the two city-regions. In both cases, there are no contacts between the core city and the agglomeration communities concerning the international activities. We would have expected a scalar shift towards the metropolitan area if the international contacts are perceived as an economic necessity for the whole city-region. However, core-cities, traditionally the scale where the international contacts are located, do not see any necessity to let other communities participate in them. There is indeed almost no re-scaling of this policy domain. It is as it has been in the hands of the core-cities. Out of competitiveness logic, there is no reason to re-scale this policy-domain to the metropolitan scale, not for the core-cities and not for the agglomeration communities.

4. Conclusion

This paper set out to test the hypothesis, put forward by works in critical urban geography, that increasing exposition to globalisation dynamics leads to a recomposition of territorial scales of governance in urban areas. The above analysis of the developments in two policy fields – urban public transport and urban foreign policy – in two unequally globalised city-regions, Berne and Zurich, shows that this is only partly true. Whereas we observe an interesting scalar shift from the local to the metropolitan (or better: regional) scale in the case of public transport in Zurich, this is not the case for public transport in Berne, where inter-communal rivalries dominate. In the case of international activities of city-regions, we witness even a total absence of scalar shifts. We can therefore conclude that not all policy areas that are important for the economic well-being of metropolitan areas are necessarily upscaled from the local arena. Our analysis has revealed that the upscaling depends on the perception of globalisation by the involved policy-makers as well as their strategic scalar considerations.

Globalisation as such is not scale-effective without policy-makers that identify the need to adapt scalarly to new economic challenges for the city-region. Whereas in the highly globalised city-region of Zurich, decision makers in both policy-areas relate their day-to-day business to globalisation pressures, this is not the case for policy-makers in the more inward-oriented city-region of Berne. Globalisation as such has different impacts on different city-regions as the specific economic scalar orientation is different.

Concerning the strategic scalar considerations, policy-makers are well aware of the differences between the two policy areas. Whereas public transport is a policy area that is both directly scale-relevant and where the interlinkages between the core city and the agglomeration communities are high, this is not the case for the international activities of communes. In the latter policy area, core cities can develop their own international activities without any dependence on the support of the agglomeration communities. They have the main burden of costs in this policy area – but the revenues as well. They have no interest in an upscaling of this policy area as this would only weaken their own position in the intra-metropolitan area competition. This is totally different in the policy domain of public transport, where there is a clear economic need for joint decision making for the development of good transport links in metropolitan areas. The relationship between intra-metropolitan and inter-metropolitan area therefore needs to be improved by looking at specific policy areas that are relevant for both scales of competition. To assume simply that intra-metropolitan

competition has vanished for the sake of international inter-metropolitan competition is a too simplistic assumption.

The empirical evidence presented in this paper strongly suggests that globalisation, as logic of adaptation to global competitiveness forces, has influenced the recomposition of governance scales in both policy-fields under scrutiny. Nevertheless, we would argue that this influence was mediate rather than immediate – as is assumed in most of the urban geography literature on governance re-scaling. The importance of perceptual aspects in these rescaling processes raises the question of agency, i.e. the extent to which actors are autonomous for choosing divergent “ideas” on how to best respond to globalisation pressures. This might indeed point to possible explanations about why city-regions with similar exposure to globalisation pressure follow quite diverging ways of responding to them.

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